

March 15, 2010

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Jerry McNerney (CA-11) today sent a letter to the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee urging increased pay for the men and women serving our country.

Earlier this year, Congressman McNerney sponsored legislation that would increase hazardous duty, imminent danger, family separation and other types of military specialty pay. Congressman McNerney introduced H.R. 4440, the Combat Operations and Medical Benefit Authorization for our Troops (COMBAT) Act, after traveling to Afghanistan as part of a bipartisan congressional delegation. During the trip, Congressman McNerney met with soldiers who asked him to work to increase military pay. Many men and women in uniform haven't seen a pay increase in years.

In the letter, Congressman McNerney urges the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee to increase pay for servicemembers in three categories: Hostile Fire Pay (HFP), Imminent Danger Pay (IDP), and Family Separation Allowance (FSA).

Hostile Fire Pay is for servicemembers exposed to hostile fire or explosion of hostile mines. Imminent Danger Pay is for servicemembers serving in specifically designated places deemed to pose a threat of physical harm or imminent danger due to insurrection, war, or terrorism. Both are currently set at \$225 per month. Family Separation Allowance is a partial reimbursement for servicemembers involuntarily separated from their dependents and is intended to provide for extra expenses that result from such a separation. Family Separation Allowance is currently set at \$250 per month.

The House Armed Services Committee is expected to take up consideration of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) this year, legislation that will help determine the pay rates for servicemembers.

The full text of the letter is below:

March 15, 2010

The Honorable Ike Skelton
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Skelton:

The brave men and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as their families at home, make tremendous sacrifices to defend liberty, justice, and American values. They should receive no less commitment from the country they serve. Many of the troops fighting overseas have not received a pay raise for dangerous service in several years. Providing a pay increase for troops in harm's way would be one modest way to reduce the hardship that overseas tours of duty place on servicemembers and their families, especially during difficult economic times.

In December 2009 I had the opportunity to visit Afghanistan with other Members of Congress. I was honored to meet with our brave men and women serving overseas. While speaking with a group of soldiers, one of them mentioned that it had been years since he received a pay increase and he asked if I could do anything to help. As a result, I introduced H.R. 4440, the COMBAT Act, which increases several types of combat pay. In particular, H.R. 4440 increases the rate of Hostile Fire Pay (HFP), Imminent Danger Pay (IDP), and Family Separation Allowance (FSA). Currently, HFP and IDP are set at \$225 per month, and FSA is set at \$250 per month.

Increasing Hostile Fire Pay and Imminent Danger Pay would assist servicemembers in Iraq, Afghanistan, or elsewhere who are subject to enemy fire or mine explosions, and boosting Family Separation Allowance would benefit servicemembers separated from their loved ones as a result of their duties. Troops facing each of these scenarios deserve our country's deepest gratitude. Adjusting these types of compensation, which have not been increased in several years, would be a meaningful and well-deserved form of assistance for our troops and their families. I recognize the federal government faces a tough budget climate and that we must make difficult fiscal decisions in the coming months and years; however, we must put the needs of servicemembers, veterans, and their families at the forefront of our budgeting priorities.

As you develop the fiscal year 2011 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), I urge you to authorize pay raises for the brave men and women serving overseas, especially those facing dangerous duties or long separations from their families. I ask that you strongly consider increasing pay, especially for Hostile Fire Pay, Imminent Danger Pay, and Family Separation Allowance. I look forward to working with you to increase pay for our troops serving in harm's way through the NDAA, and I appreciate your efforts and support on behalf of the men and women in the Armed Forces.

Sincerely,

Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress

cc: Honorable Susan Davis
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Military Personnel